

# *Horticulture* *Northwest*

Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society



*Geum triflorum*

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# Horticulture Northwest

Volume 6 Number 2 Summer 1979

Sallie D. Allen, Editor

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Geum triflorum	
Mareen S. Kruckeberg	



# Iris foetidissima

## THE SCARLET SEEDED IRIS

Roy Davidson, Bellevue, Wash.

As an indigenous species widespread in southwestern Europe and around the western end of the Mediterranean, *Iris foetidissima* has been recorded as a plant of ornamental worth since the herbalists began keeping records. The reactions of gardeners to it appear to have been somewhat mixed, in spite of the attraction of its scarlet seeds.

The common name, "stinking gladdon", and the Latin epithet *foetidissima*, from the aroma of the crushed leaves, seem to some people well-deserved--but to other noses it is the "roast beef plant". Yet its foliage is one of the chief virtues of this much maligned iris--it is strongly erect and evergreen, of a particularly rich tone and with the polish of rubbed leather if grown away from intense sun. The name "Christmas Iris", refers, of course, to the use of the red-seeded fruits in holiday decoration. Much as in *Belamcanda*, the blackberry lily, the seeds are held fast in the open capsules, like bright scarlet beads, turning darker and wrinkling as they dry. The stalks are freely branching and there may be ten to a dozen of these ornamental pods on each of them.

The chief negative factor in the garden reputation of this plant is undoubtedly its muddy, slate-dull flowers, too inconspicuous to be of interest in a genus noted for spectacular flower color. This reputation is only partly accurate--among the dowdy, blended blossoms of the wild type there are many clones and seed strains with very pretty pastel tints. In the British Iris Society Yearbook for 1974, Neel reported growing "from one pod seedlings from the extremes of dingy mauve to a quite good yellow." The apparent visual color of *Iris foetidissima* is due to a combination of purple veins over pale yellow ground. These quiet subtleties are beloved by floral decorators in combination with copper beech and bronze accessories, mellow old mahogany or rosewood, in understated elegance--and for their purposes this flower excels. In arrangements it will bear the close scrutiny it never invites in the garden.

Though not as splendid as the yellow *Spuria* irises which they much resemble, the yellow forms of *Iris foetidissima* are attractive in their own right, and are recorded under several designations. The English nurseryman Wallace listed an *I. foetidissima* 'Aurea' in his catalog in 1907, and the British Iris Yearbook of 1950 praised 'Pritchard's Superb' as one that "should be widely grown...stalk to 20 inches and flowers of good size, a beautiful primrose yellow, the ovate falls centrally veined in greenish-brown". The judges quite passed it by, but (apparently) shown again in 1962 as *I. foetidissima* var. *citrina*. This name, acceptable to British botanists, was first used by Lynch (Book of the Iris, 1904) describing a flower "wholly pale lemon yellow without purple lines". It was first cataloged by Orpington Nurseries in 1926.

The other possible flower color segregate seems to have been quite neglected. No predominantly purple form is of record, singled out for naming or



*Iris foetidissima*

seen with

award. However, a plant with clear lilac flowers was recently brought from Wales, designated by the place name Nant Gwilw (rhymes in Welsh with "want will you"). There is a hint of a bronzy inner heart to the flower. This one is not yet in distribution.

In addition to forms with seeds more yellow than scarlet, the green and white striped-leaved 'Variegata' is without doubt one of the very best of all temperate variegated foliage plants--an incomparable accent to the shade garden. It received the Award of Merit of the R. H. S. in 1968, and was cataloged in Holland as long ago as 1866. It is in constant demand, the supply somewhat limited by the necessity of increase by clonal divisions, as it does not perpetuate itself by seed. Dykes observed in his monograph (1913) that the growth rate of this species was among the slowest of all irises, and the variegated form more so.

Discussions of color forms of *Iris foetidissima* must include the brown-toned 'Holden Clough'. Of unknown origin, it appeared in a row of dissimilar seedlings in the British nursery of that name. The flowers are heavily and most attractively marked with a henna-brown pattern over pale yellow ground. Although its sterility arouses suspicion of hybrid origin, it recently produced a single colored seed, suggesting that it must indeed be related to *I. foetidissima*. 'Holden Clough' has only just begun to appear in specialists' lists, and holds considerable promise as a new color in these shade loving evergreen irises.

Should it eventually prove to be an *Iris foetidissima* hybrid, it will be the first successful one--and in spite of a century of attempts by plant breeders; it apparently was accomplished by the bees! For the record, it must be noted that the late Edith Cleaves of California flowered (and fruited) seedlings that seemed to result from attempts to outbreed *I. foetidissima* to various *Spuria* irises; they all perished before cytological examination could be made.

Since *Iris foetidissima* was named by Linnaeus in 1753 it has been distinct enough to escape the all-too-frequent taxonomic confusion that has plagued much of the genus *Iris*. Its obvious affinities with the Eurasian species of the *Spuria* alliance were recognized in 1961 by Rodionenko who proposed a sub-genus *Xyridion* to accommodate both groups. Birds are thought to be in part responsible for the dispersal of the species, as they are attracted to the succulent-looking red seeds, which are unique among irises for their color and habit of clinging to the open capsule. The plant occurs from Italy westward in France, Spain, and Portugal; around the Mediterranean on the Balearic Islands, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia; in southern England, Wales, and rarely in Ireland; in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa, and on the Azores and Canary Islands.

As long as the soil is moist, it seems impartial as to soil type; and it will grow equally well in sun or shade. A somewhat shaded location induces the best foliage, though at some sacrifice of blossoms and therefore of seeds. Brilliant sun imparts a pallid and unattractive color to the leaves. As to cold resistance, we may deduce from its range in warm-temperate maritime regions that extreme cold would damage the broad, persistent leaves. It will endure considerable cold, but not for many seasons, as the slow rate of growth does not allow recovery to normal vigor.



Fig. 1

Cheilanthes argentea ssp. scalei

# Cheilanthes argentea

Reginald Kaye, Waithman Nurseries  
Silverdale, England

This attractive "silver fern" is seen often in greenhouses in Great Britain, and no doubt in many other countries. Given the right conditions it will thrive, and self-sown sporelings will appear freely amongst other plants in the greenhouse.

A winter temperature of 8°C rising to not more than 16°C in summer, and a freely draining compost containing broken sandstone and charcoal, fibrous peat and coarse sand, watered freely during the growing season but not sprayed over the foliage, and a position as near the glass as convenient, are the requirements for growing perfect specimens. Over-heating and overhead spraying are most detrimental and will cause malformation of the fronds and unhealthy plants.

*Cheilanthes argentea* comes from Siberia, Japan, China, the Malay Peninsula and parts of India where it is found usually in rocky ground on quick draining slopes. It usually grows about 8 to 10 cm. in height but may reach 15 cm. or even more in optimum conditions.

The plant gets the name "silver fern" from the undersides of the fronds being coated with a dense waxy powder, pale straw becoming pure white as it matures. The upper surface is a slightly glossy, deep green colour. The long slender stems (stipites) are shining black, the blades are deltoid, bi-to tripinnatifid, crenately lobed, the lower pinnae being much larger than the rest. The sporangia are black and when mature join up to form a continuous conspicuous black line, framing the white waxy frond surface in a very pleasing fashion. My sketch shows the lower surfaces of four fronds, the upper surfaces of the rest.

Although found as far north as Siberia I have not been able to keep it in the open garden in England, probably because of our wet winter weather, for it has wintered with me in unheated glass-houses, kept on the dry side until spring. It might survive out-of-doors in similar habitats enjoyed by *Pityrogramma triangularis*, the gold-back fern.

## HORTICULTURAL THERAPY SEMINAR

To introduce their new training program in Horticultural Therapy, Edmonds Community College will be offering a free one day Symposium. Presentation will be made by local, regional and national authorities. For more information contact Patsy Roehl by writing or calling Edmonds Community College, 20,000 58th Ave. West, Lynnwood, Washington, zip 98036. Phone: (206) 775-4444 ext. 374.

# The Vine Maple And Its Variants

J. D. Vertrees  
 Maplewood Nursery  
 Roseburg, Oregon

The native vine maple (*Acer circinatum* Pursh) should be quite familiar to all the readers of Horticulture Northwest. It was first described in 1814; it was introduced into cultivation in England by Douglas about 1826 and has been prized as an ornamental plant since that time. In the past 20 years, its popularity has been increasing in parts of the United States and in Europe. Perhaps its over-familiarity in the native range (British Columbia to Northern California) may have held back its wide use as an ornamental in the Northwest. However, it is now becoming more widely used in landscapes.

This maple is a very close relative to *Acer palmatum*, the "Japanese maple" of the horticultural trade. There are at least eight species in the Series *Palmata*. All are native to Japan, with the single exception of *A. circinatum*. Most of the species in the Series, especially *A. japonicum* and *A. palmatum*, have a great many variants. Since the Japanese have been cultivating these species for over 300 years, many cultivars have arisen as named individuals. The foliage variation, plant size, coloration, and growth habit vary in almost infinite form.

Not so with the "cousin", the vine maple. Until quite recently, authenticated variations were not recorded. There was a variety, *fulvum*, recorded in 1915 which had yellowish branches and flowers. Apparently it never became widely known.

A selection named 'Elegans' was made in 1954 from the Skagit Valley in B.C. This form had the lobes more deeply separated than the normal foliage. A plant of this form is still located in the University of Washington Arboretum.

One of the most exciting discoveries in this species was made in 1960 by Dr. Warner Monroe of Portland, Oregon. While hiking in the upper reaches of the McKenzie River in Oregon, he discovered this small plant growing in dense underbrush, in a thick stand of Douglas fir. It was very fortunate that he persisted in his study of this plant, bringing to the horticultural world this fine variant. It was described and named by Brian Mulligan in BAILEYA (Vol. 19, No. 3, 1974), as *Acer circinatum 'Monroe'*. The lacy, multi-divided leaves are a complete departure from the typical vine maple leaf. They are reminiscent of the fern leaf *Japonicum* (*A. japonicum 'Aconitifolium'*). In the Fall, the foliage colors as well as that of the species. The growth habit on young plants also seems typical and not dwarfed.

Dwarf selections of vine maple are becoming more noticeable in collections. Most of these originate from "Witches' brooms" discovered in various locations in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. In our collection, we are growing six different clones originating from these three regions. The most desirable form to date comes from British Columbia, from plant material sent to me by Alleyne Cook of North Vancouver. After many years of comparative growing, this selection has been given the registered name of 'Little

'Gem'. It forms a tight globe-shaped bush, with greatly reduced typically-shaped leaves. Other "Witches' broom" selections grown in comparison seem to be less dwarf, have coarser shoots, or somewhat larger foliage. I am sure other "Witches' brooms" will be found in the future.

So far, no true variegated form has come to my attention. I have searched extensively in the native stands in our region, and know of others who are "keeping their eye out" for a native variegated form. A true white-green, or a white-pink-green variegant such as *Acer palmatum* 'Orido-nishiki', or 'Versicolor', may well exist in some native locality. If found in a landscape planting, I would well suspect a hybrid with *A. palmatum*. Reasoning that the species in Series *Palmata* all show considerable variation potential in the foliage, I conclude that the possibilities of such variegation in *A. circinatum* also may exist somewhere in native stands.

I am sure that serious search through our abundant plant population throughout the Northwest will eventually uncover other interesting variants of this desirable small maple. Here is another objective for you Northwest Horticulture hikers and plant hunters.

## Dryopteris sieboldii

Judith I. Jones

*Dryopteris sieboldii* is a handsome evergreen fern from China and Japan which is quite different in appearance to the usual *Dryopteris* frond. Its leathery blue-green fronds are once pinnate, the terminal pinna being oblong-lanceolate, and measuring eight to twelve inches broad, with two or three pairs of similar but shorter pinnae below. The finely toothed edge of the pinnae undulate unevenly creating great variety on any one specimen. An older plant will build up a thick knobby rhizome heavily covered with dark brown scales. The fertile fronds have a stem twice as long as the barren ones. Sori are scattered thickly but unevenly on the underside of the pinnae, then as the spore ripens the sori change from orange-brown to black.

*Dryopteris sieboldii* is considered marginally hardy in the northwest coastal area yet many gardeners have reported little or no frost damage to established plants. This in a year when the unusual dryness and unrelenting low temperatures damaged many ferns considered before to be fully hardy for us. However, a protected spot in the garden should be sought when planting this fern out. Getting it established requires some patience with its slow growth. But once it settles in your reward will be the sight of its bold beauty enhancing your favorite nook.

# Phacelia sericea

Francisca Darts, Surrey, British Columbia

*Phacelia sericea* - that beautiful dwarf with hairy leaves of jagged edges of a silver-grey colour and flowers of blue that I have doted on in the mountains, germinated so easily from seed that I knew I was chosen to grow it successfully where so many others had failed. It is in the transplanting from the seedling stage to the individual pot stage that so many losses occur, and even here my success was spectacular. Did I not now have about 3 dozen little gems looking mistily at me? Some of them were passed on to a plant sale, but in October the remainder were safely placed under our deck where they got no rain but plenty of fresh air.

February and March came around with the winter sun low in the sky and striking my little pets. More water was needed, and this I gave them by a fine spray overhead watering. One by one the darlings rotted away, until in May only one wretched plant was left, looking very sick. Out it was set on a dry bank, with implications to do or die, see if I cared, and it picked up immediately. A very dry sunny summer probably helped. By fall it looked beautiful, although it did not bloom. By February I saw no sign of it, not even the mush it probably became. Pride goeth after a fall!

seed sown December 1976  
 transplanted to pots June 1977  
 over-wintered 1977-78  
 last plant to garden May 1978



Illustration: Rosemary Burnham  
 By permission of Alpine Garden Club of B.C.

*Phacelia sericea*

N.O.H.S. NOTES

Summer 1979

Supplement to Horticulture Northwest

Editor: Enid Eshom  
11694 N.E. Sunset Loop  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110  
842-5251

President's Newsletter

Members and Friends,

Those who were privileged to visit the Tacoma Garden of Mrs. Corydon Wagner (Eulalie) will retain a memory of exquisite beauty combined with gracious hospitality. I'm advised by a number of those who accompanied the tour that they found it to be an unforgettable experience. Thank you Mrs. Wagner and the Tacoma Garden Club for your hospitality and a highly successful tour.

On April 19th we sponsored Sally Reath who delivered a most fascinating lecture on topiary art. She is an internationally renowned horticulturist and lecturer. I suspect we will be viewing locally many topiary creations inspired by her skillfully projected slides and easily understandable narration, spiced with good humor.

Several of your officers met with the search committee composed of five members of the University of Washington faculty who are seeking a Director of Arboreta. We understand that the list of candidates has been reduced to two and a decision should be reached, hopefully, by the end of May.

I am pleased to announce our recent receipt of \$1,000.00 from The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust for our Educational Fund. We are very excited with the growth of this Fund and any assistance the membership can provide in reaching our goal of \$100,000 will advance the date for the expansion of our program of instruction in practical horticulture.

Sincerely,

Lester W. Pettit  
President

## We Need Your Help

The N.O.H.S. Horticultural Education Fund drive is being prepared. The use of interest from this \$100,000 Fund (income tax deductible) is restricted to furthering horticultural education, development and related activities.

We would appreciate your help in getting this drive under way by providing names and addresses of individuals, business concerns or foundations who might be interested in supporting this fund. Please mail your suggestions to Betty Miller.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Membership Application

### NORTHWEST ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



**Purpose:**  
Shall be to further horticultural development and maintenance of the University of Washington Arboretum and plant life situated therein.

**Membership activities encompass:**  
Lecture Series, Study Groups, Annual Fall Plant Sale, Tours of gardens of horticultural interest, Quarterly Horticultural Journal.

(Please fill in form as you wish information to appear in yearbook.)

Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (First Name) \_\_\_\_\_

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(Membership renewals will come due January, May and September, whichever month is closest to date of Membership Application.)

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938-1045  
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365-0720

COMING GARDEN EVENTS  
SUMMER 1979

June 14, N.O.H.S. Fern Sale, Bellevue Square Pavilion, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Thursday and Friday, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. on Saturday.

June 23 Flowering House Plant Show presented by Puget Sound Gesneriad Society. Olympic Room, Seattle Center. 1 P.M. to 6 P.M. on Saturday, 12 P.M. to 6 P.M. on Sunday.

June 23 Tacoma Rose Society Show. 1st Baptist Church, 9th and Market, Tacoma. 1 P.M. to 7 P.M. on Saturday, 1 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. on Sunday.

June 28 Explorers' Walk. Sponsored by the Arboretum Foundation. Meet at the Foundation office parking lot, 10 A.M.

June 28 Rose talk and slide show by Leonie Bell, noted artist and co-author of The Fragrant Year. Doces' Furniture Store, north of Aurora Village. 7 to 9 P.M.

June 30 Grays Harbor Rose Society Show. Grays Harbor College, Aberdeen, 1 P.M. to 9 P.M.

July 7 Valley Rose Society Show. Southcenter Mall, Seattle. Approximate times, 1:30 P.M. to 8 P.M. on Saturday and 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Sunday.

July 26 Explorers' Walk. Sponsored by the Arboretum Foundation. Meet at the Foundation office parking lot, 10 A.M.

Aug. 15-19 Grays Harbor Dahlia Show, Grays Harbor Fairgrounds, Elma, WA.

Aug. 18-19 Kitsap County Dahlia Society Show. Eastside Masonic Temple, Bremerton.

Aug. 22 Snohomish County Dahlia Society's 70th Annual Show! This is the oldest dahlia society in the United States. Floral Hall in Forest Park, Everett. 4 P.M. to 9 P.M. on Wednesday and 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Thursday.

Aug. 23 Explorers' Walk. Sponsored by the Arboretum Foundation. Meet at the Foundation office parking lot, 10 A.M.

Aug. 25 Seattle Dahlia Society Show, Northgate Mall Aug. 26

Aug. 25 Evergreen Rose Society Show, Northgate Mall Aug. 26

Aug. 25 Washington State Dahlia Society Show, Pacific Lutheran University, Student Union Bldg., So. 121st and Park South, Tacoma. 2 P.M. to 6 P.M. on Saturday and 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Sunday.

Sept. 8 Puget Sound Dahlia Society Show. Seattle Center. & 9

Sept. 15 Olympic Dahlia Society Show. Peninsula Community College, Port Angeles. & 16

Sept. 28 Explorers' Walk. Sponsored by the Arboretum Foundation. Meet at the Foundation office parking lot, 10 A.M.

Sept. 28 N.O.H.S. Plant Sale. Bellevue Square Pavilion. & 29

# Water Less

## ENJOY GARDENING MORE

Ginny McElwain, Seattle, Washington

No matter how you look at it, watering is a bore. There are at least twenty better things to do on a lovely warm summer day than set out sprinklers, but what else can you do if you want to keep your prized rhododendrons from curling up their leaves and dying? Well, even if you can't throw your hoses out, you can learn how to make every drop of water work for you in the soil as long as possible.

Of course, with incredible self-restraint you could landscape only with drought tolerant trees and shrubs, ones that could survive with just our infrequent summer rains, only needing extra water the first two years and during prolonged dry spells. Actually, many plants from the Mediterranean and other dry areas are better off with less water than most gardeners feel obliged to give them and could make an interesting grouping in a corner that's particularly dry.

But if you can't resist lettuce and rhododendrons and all the other plants that need moisture in the soil throughout the summer, you'd do well to learn a few water-stretching tricks. If you can, add organic matter to the soil. It will act like a sponge, soaking up and holding moisture, slowly making it available to roots. Next, cover every square inch of bare soil with a mulch. Uncovered soil not only loses water through evaporation, but also loses more water through runoff than mulched soil. Water drops tend to break up the surface texture, washing fine particles into spaces and creating a crusted, nearly impermeable surface.

After preparing the soil, learn how to water, which is more difficult than you might expect. The idea is to give each plant as much water as it needs, but no more. Deep, but infrequent, watering is the key. First, get to know your plants, finding out which have shallow, thirsty root systems and which have deep taproots. Vegetables, of course, won't need to be watered as deeply as most shrubs, but make sure that you're getting moisture down as far as their roots can reasonably be expected to go.

Next, with a shovel, find out how long your sprinkler takes to wet the soil a foot down. Don't skip this step and just make an educated guess, since any more water than a plant needs will be wasted, but less will produce shallow roots that are vulnerable to unexpected drought. The rate at which water moves through the soil varies tremendously, being slow through clay, which holds a lot of water that is not available to roots, and quick through sandy loam. Make several tests in different parts of your yard to be sure you have an accurate estimate of how much water is needed.

Now don't water until the soil under the mulch feels dry. With enough organic matter in the soil, this could be a week or more even in the hottest summer weather. Again, don't guess, get down and feel the soil for yourself.

Most plants need more water in spring, when they're putting out new leaves and shoots, than at any other time so don't be tricked into thinking

that there's no need to get out the hoses until June. Just because April and May are cloudy doesn't mean there's been much rain. On the other hand, don't flood your yard in August and September just because the weather's hot. Let the soil get on the dry side when new growth hardens up and water requirements go down.

Your lawn is probably the most thirsty part of your yard, partly because most of the roots are in the top four inches of soil and partly because the grass tends to become dormant in the summer heat and needs lots of water to overcome this natural adaptation. Raising the cutting height to two inches or more and watering less often, but to at least six inches, will help the grass develop a deeper root system. If you don't mind a brown lawn for a few months, you can get by with just a few waterings. When the weather is cooler, and fall rains arrive, your lawn will green up beautifully.

Now with these tips on squeezing the most out of your water, get out and enjoy your garden and don't be a slave to those sprinklers and hoses.



*Fraxinus ornus*

# Fraxinus ornus

the flowering or manna ash

by Diane Steen

A tree which can be a very attractive ornament in Northwest gardens, but is not frequently found, is the flowering ash. Examples are available at the Arboretum and on the Campus Parkway, between Brooklyn Ave. and the University Bridge.

*Fraxinus ornus* is unlike most ashes in that it bears fluffy, white to greenish flowers in late spring. Other ashes are not noted for their flowering characteristics. Rather, their visual assets stem largely from their very long and graceful leaves. With few exceptions these are 6 to 12 inches long and divided into as many as 12 to 13 leaflets. The resulting canopy formed by any ash is open and softly textured, casting little shade so that grass and other plants can grow beneath.

The ash is a tree which we think of primarily for its very hard, resilient wood. This is used for handles for tools, for sporting goods - especially baseball bats and tennis racquets - and was once used in building the frames for carriages and automobiles because of its shock-absorbing properties.

In ancient northern European mythology, the ash, like so many other trees, was regarded as sacred. It is a magnificent, well-formed tree which is usually found alone, not in forests, because of its great need for nourishment. One can well understand, on seeing a lone ash, why the ancient Norsemen believed that under its branches was held the court of the gods.

In addition to the medium sized (to 40 feet) flowering ash, the smaller Bunge's ash, *Fraxinus bungeana* (10 to 12 feet) also produces creamy white flowers, although these are somewhat less conspicuous than those of the flowering ash. The white ash, *Fraxinus americana* (to 120 feet), is perhaps for colder climates than this, but is a handsome, tall tree whose leaves turn a rich purple in the fall. The European ash, *Fraxinus excelsior*, hasn't the same lovely color as the white ash, but is somewhat more refined in texture. The selected form 'Pendula' is a picturesque, strongly weeping small tree, especially effective in winter. The Oregon ash, *Fraxinus latifolia*, is found in the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range and is not usually considered a garden tree.

Some people don't like ashes because of their short growing season and also because of the heavy seed production which results in so many seedlings. But this is now less of a problem because of a variety of seedless cultivars which are available. The winged seeds are really very graceful, like half a maple seed, and fall spinning to the earth.

Ashes are available from nurseries in Portland and Vancouver, B.C., and can be obtained from several nurseries in the East.

References: W. J. Bean, Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles, John Murray, London, 1951.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record, Plants and Gardens, "Nursery Source Guide", Vol. 33, No. 2 (Summer, 1977).

Herbert L. Edlin, What Wood is That? Thames and Hudson, London, 1969.

## Book Reviews

THE WORLD OF IRISES, edited by Bee Warburton and Melba Hamblen. Published by the American Iris Society, 1978. 415 pages plus appendixes, glossary, bibliography and index; 32 pages full color, 34 contributors and authors. Hardcover, \$15.00, from the American Iris Society Librarian, 226 East 20th St., Tulsa, OK, 74119.

The American Iris Society had not published an authoritative book on irises since 1959. Changes in the world of irises have been legion over the intervening years. The magnitude of those changes is reflected in the number of experts who devoted several years to compiling the information in The World of Irises.

The book is primarily intended for the serious gardener, preferably someone already familiar with irises in all their diversity. Some of the chapters are highly technical and require some knowledge of botany and genetics for full understanding. However, approximately 300 pages are devoted to an explanation of the various types of irises, their development, and their varying cultural requirements, and it is in those pages that the average gardener will find a wealth of interesting material.

The book is divided into three major sections: Garden Irises; Culture; and Iris Colors and Genetics. There are chapters dealing with all the major classifications of irises, bearded and nonbearded, tall and small, rhizomatous and bulbous, for wet places and dry places, all accompanied by drawings or pictures. Probably the greatest surprise to someone who is not an iris fancier is the development since 1950 of several new types of irises for the garden.

Of special interest to gardeners in this area is the development of two groups of vigorous, hardy small irises suitable for the rockery or small doorway garden. These are the Standard Dwarf Bearded and the Intermediate Bearded, first developed in the late '50s, and now available in a wide range of colors. Also of interest here is the hybridizing being done with our native Pacific Coast irises. Developments are already remarkable, and these irises are very easy to grow in this area, even tolerating some shade. These are also excellent for arranging.

Arrangers might also enjoy the chapters on Miniature Tall Bearded (Table) Irises, written by Jean Witt of Seattle, and on the Siberian and Louisiana irises. Each chapter contains some cultural information for that particular type.

Development of new colors and patterns in irises has been continual since hybridizing began early in this century. Photos, line drawings, and watercolor prints illustrate this. The color plates in the book are so luscious that I was tempted to haul out my catalogs and order more irises, especially more of those lovely pink, apricot, peach, and orange tones. As an iris specialist and judge, I can hardly be without this book. Any flower show judge should familiarize themselves with the classifications of irises likely to be grown in this area. (A.I.S. judges go into SHOCK when they observe the average

flower show judging of irises.) The more average gardener would probably prefer to use such a highly specialized book only as a reference, perhaps owned by their garden club or local library. It could be helpful in identifying an unknown species or classification of iris, or in finding out how to grow a gift plant. Personally, I cannot see how you can resist growing a few irises after you see what is now available. This book could get you hooked.

Jayne Ritchie

PLANTAE OCCIDENTALIS: 200 Years of Botanical Art in British Columbia. 1979. House Maria Newberry. Technical Bulletin, The Botanical Garden, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Number 11. 132 pages, illustrations, \$8.95.

This publication, designed to accompany the major art exhibition produced by the Botanical Garden and now showing at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, details the historical development of botanical and floral illustration in British Columbia during the last two hundred years. The book also outlines the various techniques and methods used by contemporary botanical artists to depict flowers and plants. Another section contains an ethnobotanical commentary that describes the appearance, growth habit, and cultural and economic value of each of the many native British Columbian plants in the exhibition. In addition, there are 45 full-color illustrations, and a catalogue containing biographies of the fifty-three historical and contemporary artists and 109 small black and white photographs of their paintings. The exhibition poster and four 9" x 12" color reproductions are also available.

GARDENING AS THERAPY: A Resource Manual for Development of Horticultural Therapy Programs for the Summer Season. 1979. Coxon, Margaret E. and David Tarrant. Technical Bulletin, The Botanical Garden, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Number 6. 34 pages. \$4.25.

This well-illustrated manual is designed as a teaching guide for instructors and participants in a hortitherapy program. It has been constructed so that anyone, regardless of their lack of expertise in plant care, can prepare and present a gardening class to special groups. Each of the ten chapters outlines a specific topic, providing a list of working materials, step-by-step instructions, and general plant information.

The emphasis in Spring Season is on houseplant care. Topics include propagation from stem, leaf and seed; potting mixes; transplanting; and climate control. The book also contains a list of popular houseplants, their descriptions, growth requirements and best methods of propagation; a list of suppliers; and an extensive bibliography. Although intended specifically for those persons interested in developing a gardening program for the handicapped, the information presented will prove valuable to anyone interested in growing houseplants.

GARDENING AS THERAPY: A Resource Manual for Development of Horticultural Therapy Programs for the Spring Season. 1978. Coxon, Margaret E., Co-ordinator. Technical Bulletin, The Botanical Garden, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Number 5. 36 pages. \$4.25.

The second volume of a four-part series, this manual concerns a wide range of summer gardening activities. Designed, like the first book in the series, for use in horti-

therapy, this publication is a more advanced and extensive treatment of possible gardening programs. The twelve topics follow a logical sequence from sowing seed, indoors and outdoors; making a cold frame, planters and hanging baskets; to bedding out plants and summer maintenance. There are also sections on choosing plants; where to place them; arranging raised beds; a suggested garden plan; and a full calendar of the summer months that indicates when to undertake the activities described in the book. Of particular interest is a description of the methods that can be used to dry and preserve flowers and herbs. Enlivened by illustrations, which graphically describe the materials and methods outlined in the text, the book presents an outstanding amount of information on every aspect of summer gardening. This comprehensive manual, written primarily for use in the development of gardening programs for special groups, is also an informative guide for the interested home gardener.

## Tidbits by Ladybug



If you have a large number of seeds to clean from chaffy, papery pods or involucres (i.e. *Liliaceae*), you can do it quickly by placing the pods in a shoe box with a child's hard rubber ball, closing the lid and shaking for a few minutes. The seeds and chaff are then readily separated. To clean out seeds from their capsules in genera like *Penstemon*, which are hard to separate, spread out the capsules on their stems onto a hard surface, then use a brick across the top like an iron...it will collapse the capsule walls and release the seeds, but the mass of seeds will act like ball bearings so that the brick will not crush the layer of seeds. (This was learned from Wayne Roderick!)

Dennis Thompson

Plant combinations aren't always simple. Here are some winners. Silver-leaved plants (*Artemisia*, *Senecio*, and *Helichrysum*) as background and support for red bulbs (*gladiolus*, baby *gladiolus*, lilies, *amaryllis*, *montbretia*, etc.); *hosta* and finely dissected ferns; *petasites* and *corydalis*; *cytisus* and *sumac*; *redbark maples* with evergreen winter background; *Mermaid rose* and *turquoise-berry* (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*); *ematis* and white-barked birch for nice fall effect; *bamboo*, *pine*, and *fatsia*; *wild ginger* (*asarum*) and *sweet woodruff*; *Oxalis oregana* and *Iris foetidissima*; *rose astilbe* and variegated *basketgrass*; *petasites* and *cattails*; *bearded iris*, *ceanothus*, and early roses

(some of the species shrub-roses); delphiniums behind roses; orange tulips with *Pulmonaria angustifolia* and chartreuse *Euphorbia epithymoides*; *Euphorbia myrsinites* in bloom with *Alchemilla vulgaris* for a lemon-lime symphony; *myosotis* and tulips in rose, pink, or white; and goodyera and moss in a deeply shaded corner.

Certain rampant plants may be desired in the garden in limited areas--plants such as horsetail, bamboo, *Rosa pisocarpa*, etc. that have great landscape potential. Plant these in large containers such as 3-gallon cans and completely bury the can; this will restrict the plant's aggressive tendencies for several years. For more permanent separation, use concrete curbing at least 12" deep, even deeper is better.

*Acorus gramineus* is native of Asia; it adapts readily to the Chinese table gardens or Japanese bonsai, especially in dwarf forms such as *A.g. pusillus*. In nature these often grow clinging to rocks at the edge of lakes or streams. You can learn an Oriental trick to establish them on such rocks: prune the roots back severely and fasten them to the rock by tying in the desired position. Then place the rock in water, partially submerged. New roots growing back will cling to the rock. If you remove the leaves once or twice a year you can make the plant more dwarf.

If your garden is fairly pesticide-free, you can enjoy flowers as an exciting addition to the diet in spring and summer. Daylily flowers are fun in salads, vegetable dishes, or by themselves (they are the dried "golden needles" of Oriental cooking--their taste, strongest when fresh, ranges from astringent and bland to sweet and fruity; some leave a sweet, papaya-like aftertaste). Nasturtiums are peppery, violets are light and delicate. Elderberry flowers are musky--separate the flowers from the stems, since the green stems are somewhat toxic. Woodruff flowers are heavily fragrant, particularly when dried for a day or two. Most members of the rose family have an astringent taste.

*Ophiopogon spicatus* (*Liriope graminifolia*) is the Chinese "Herb of the Scholar". Traditionally it is grown as a pot plant, often in a brightly decorated pot, to grace the desk of a scholar. The dry leaves make excellent book marks!



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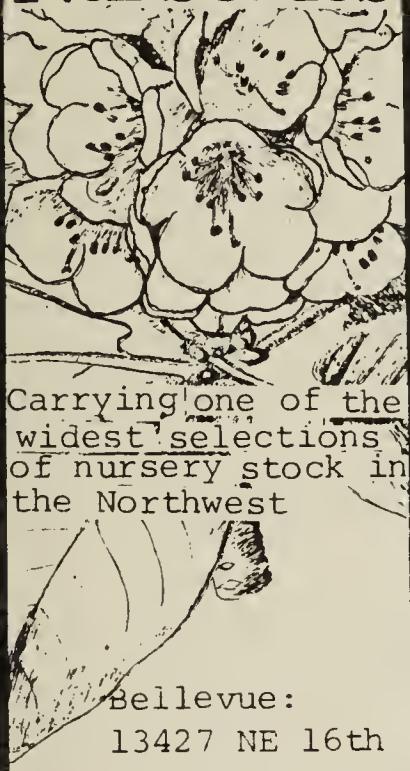
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